

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER VI. HARRY ANNESLEY TELLS HIS SECRET.

HARRY hurried down to Cheltenham, hardly knowing what he was going to do or say when he got there. He went to the hotel and dined alone. "What's all this that's up about Captain Mountjoy?" said a stranger, coming and whispering to him at his table.

The stranger was almost a stranger, but Harry did know his name. It was Mr. Baskerville, the hunting man. Mr. Baskerville was not rich, and not especially popular, and had no special amusement but that of riding two nags in the winter along the roads of Cheltenham in the direction which the hounds took. It was still summer, and the nags who had been made to do their work in London were picking up a little strength in idleness, or as Mr. Baskerville called it, getting into condition. In the meantime Mr. Baskerville amused himself as well as he could by lying in bed or playing lawn-tennis. He sometimes dined at the hotel in order that the club might think that he was entertained at friends' houses; but the two places were nearly the same to him, as he could achieve a dinner and half a pint of wine for five or six shillings at each of them. A more empty existence, or, one would be inclined to say, less pleasurable, no one could pass; but he had always a decent coat on his back and a smile on his face, and five shillings in his pocket with which to pay for his dinner. His asking what was up about Scarborough showed, at any rate, that he was very backward in the world's news.

"I believe he has vanished," said Harry.

"Oh yes, of course he's vanished. Everybody knows that, he vanished ever so long ago; but where is he?"

"If you can tell them in Scotland Yard they will be obliged to you."

"I suppose it is true that the police are after him? Dear me! Forty thousand a year! This is a very queer story about the property, isn't it?"

"I don't know the story exactly, and therefore can hardly say whether it is queer or not."

"But about the younger son? People say that the father has contrived that the younger son shall have the money. What I hear is that the whole property is to be divided, and that the captain is to have half, on condition that he keeps out of the way. But I am sure that you know more about it. You used to be intimate with both the brothers. I have seen you down here with the captain. Where is he?" And again he whispered into Harry's ear. But he could not have selected any subject more distasteful, and, therefore, Harry repulsed Mr. Baskerville not in the most courteous manner.

"Hang it! what airs that fellow gives himself," he said to another friend of the same kidney; "that's young Annesley, the son of a twopenny-halfpenny parson down in Hertfordshire. The ways these fellows put on now are unbearable. He hasn't got a horse to ride, but to hear him talk you'd think he was mounted three days a week."

"He's heir to old Prosper, of Buston Hall."

"How's that? But is he? I never heard that before. What's Buston Hall worth?" Then Mr. Baskerville made up his mind to be doubly civil to Harry Annesley the next time he saw him.

Harry had to consider on that night in

what manner he would endeavour to see Florence Mountjoy on the next day. He was thoroughly discontented with himself as he walked about the streets of Cheltenham. He had now not only allowed the disappearance of Scarborough to pass by without stating when and where and how he had last seen him, but had directly lied on the subject. He had told the man's brother that he had not seen him for some weeks previous, whereas to have concealed his knowledge on such a subject was in itself held to be abominable. He was ashamed of himself, and the more so, because there was no one to whom he could talk openly on the matter. And it seemed to him as though all whom he met questioned him as to the man's disappearance, as if they suspected him. What was the man to him, or the man's guilt, or his father, that he should be made miserable? The man's attack upon him had been ferocious in its nature—so brutal, that when he had escaped from Mountjoy Scarborough's clutches there was nothing for him but to leave him lying in the street where, in his drunkenness, he had fallen. And now, in consequence of this, misery had fallen upon himself. Even this empty-headed fellow Baskerville, a man the poverty of whose character Harry perfectly understood, had questioned him about Mountjoy Scarborough. It could not, he thought, be possible that Baskerville could have had any reasons for suspicion, and yet the very sound of the enquiry stuck in his ears.

On the next morning at eleven o'clock he knocked at Mrs. Mountjoy's house in Montpellier Place, and asked for the elder lady. Mrs. Mountjoy was out, and Harry at once enquired for Florence. The servant at first seemed to hesitate, but at last showed Harry into the dining-room. There he waited five minutes, which seem to him to be half an hour, and then Florence came to him. "Your mother is not at home?" he said, putting out his hand.

"No, Mr. Annesley, but I think she will be back soon. Will you wait for her?"

"I do not know whether I am not glad that she should be out. Florence, I have something that I must tell you."

"Something that you must tell me!"

He had called her Florence once before, on a happy afternoon which he well remembered, but he was not thinking of that now. Her name, which was always in his mind, had come to him naturally, as though he had no time to pick and choose about names in the importance of the

communication which he had to make. "Yes. I don't believe that you were ever really engaged to your cousin Mountjoy."

"No, I never was," she answered briskly. Harry Annesley was certainly a handsome man, but no young man living ever thought less of his own beauty. He had fair wavy hair, which he was always submitting to some barber, very much to the unexpressed disgust of poor Florence; because to her eyes the longer the hair grew the more beautiful was the wearer of it. His forehead, and eyes, and nose, were all perfect in their form.

Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command.

There was a peculiar brightness in his eye which would have seemed to denote something absolutely great in his character, had it not been for the wavering indecision of his mouth. There was, as it were, a vacillation in his lips which took away from the manliness of his physiognomy. Florence, who regarded his face as almost divine, was yet conscious of some weakness about his mouth which she did not know how to interpret. But yet, without knowing why it was so, she was accustomed to expect from him doubtful words, half expressed words, which would not declare to her his perfected thoughts as she would have them declared. He was six feet high, neither broad, nor narrow, nor fat, nor thin; and a very Apollo in Florence's eye. To the elders who knew him, the quintessence of his beauty lay in the fact that he was altogether unconscious of it. He was a man who counted nothing on his personal appearance for the performance of those deeds which he was most anxious to achieve. The one achievement now essentially necessary to his happiness was the possession of Florence Mountjoy; but it certainly never occurred to him that he was more likely to obtain this because he was six feet high, or because his hair waved becomingly.

"I have supposed so," he said in answer to her last assertion.

"You ought to have known it for certain. I mean to say that had I ever been engaged to my cousin, I should have been miserable at such a moment as this. I never should have given him up because of the gross injustice done to him about the property. But his disappearance in this dreadful way would, I think, have killed me. As it is, I can think of nothing else, because he is my cousin."

"It is very dreadful," said Harry.

"Have you any idea what can have happened to him?"

"Not in the least. Have you?"

"None at all. But——"

"But what?"

"I was the last person who saw him."

"You saw him last!"

"At least I know no one who saw him after me."

"Have you told them?"

"I have told no one but you. I have come down here to Cheltenham on purpose to tell you."

"Why me?" she said, as though struck with fear at such an assertion on his part.

"I must tell some one, and I have not known whom else to tell. His father appears not at all anxious about him. His brother I do not altogether trust. Were I to go to these men who are only looking after their money, I should be communicating with his enemies. Your mother already regards me as his enemy. If I told the police, I should simply be brought into a court of justice, where I should be compelled to mention your name."

"Why mine?"

"I must begin the story from the beginning. One night I was coming home in London very late, about two o'clock, when whom should I meet in the street suddenly but Mountjoy Scarborough. It came out afterwards that he had then been gambling; but when he encountered me he was intoxicated. He took me suddenly by the collar and shook me violently, and did his best to maltreat me. What words were spoken I cannot remember; but his conduct to me was as that of a savage beast. I struggled with him in the streets, as a man would struggle who is attacked by a wild dog. I think that he did not explain the cause of his hatred, though, of course, my memory as to what took place at that moment is disturbed and imperfect; but I did know in my heart why it was that he had quarrelled with me."

"Why was it?" Florence asked.

"Because he thought that I had ventured to love you."

"No, no," cried Florence; "he could not have thought that."

"He did think so, and he was right enough. If I have never said so before, I am bound at any rate to say it now." He paused for a moment, but she made him no answer. "In the struggle between us he fell on the pavement against the rail—and then I left him."

"Well?"

"He has never been heard of since. On the following day, in the afternoon, I left London for Buston; but nothing had been then heard of his disappearance. I neither knew of it nor suspected it. The question is, when others were searching for him, was I bound to go to the police and declare what I had suffered from him that night? Why should I connect his going with the outrage which I had suffered?"

"But why not tell it all?"

"I should have been asked why he had quarrelled with me. Ought I to have said that I did not know? Ought I to have pretended that there was no cause? I did know, and there was a cause. It was because he thought that I might prevail with you now that he was a beggar, disowned by his own father."

"I would never have given him up for that," said Florence.

"But do you not see that your name would have been brought in—that I should have had to speak of you as though I thought it possible that you loved me?" Then he paused, and Florence sat silent. But another thought struck him now. It occurred to him that under the plea put forward he would appear to seek shelter from his silence as to her name. He was aware how anxious he was on his own behalf not to mention the occurrence in the street, and it seemed that he was attempting to escape under the pretence of a fear that her name would be dragged in. "But independently of that I do not see why I should be subjected to the annoyance of letting it be known that I was thus attacked in the streets. And the time has now gone by. It did not occur to me when first he was missed that the matter would have been of such importance. Now it is too late."

"I suppose that you ought to have told his father."

"I think that I ought to have done so. But at any rate I have come to explain it all to you. It was necessary that I should tell someone. There seems to be no reason to suspect that the man has been killed."

"Oh, I hope not; I hope not that."

"He has been spirited away—out of the way of his creditors. For myself I think that it has all been done with his father's connivance. Whether his brother be in the secret or not I cannot tell, but I suspect he is. There seems to be no doubt that Captain Scarborough himself has run so overboard into debt as to make the payment of his creditors impossible by

anything short of the immediate surrender of the whole property. Some month or two since they all thought that the squire was dying, and that there would be nothing to do but to sell the property which would then be Mountjoy's, and pay themselves. Against this the dying man has rebelled, and has come, as it were, out of the grave to disinherit the son who has already contrived to disinherit himself. It is all an effort to save Tretton."

"But it is dishonest," said Florence.

"No doubt about it. Looking at it any way it is dishonest. Either the inheritance must belong to Mountjoy still, or it could not have been his when he was allowed to borrow money upon it."

"I cannot understand it. I thought it was entailed upon him. Of course it is nothing to me. It never could have been anything."

"But now the creditors declare that they have been cheated, and assert that Mountjoy is being kept out of the way to aid old Mr. Scarborough in the fraud. I cannot but say that I think it is so. But why he should have attacked me just at the moment of his going, or why rather he should have gone immediately after he had attacked me, I cannot say. I have no concern whatever with him or his money, though I hope—I hope that I may always have much with you. Oh, Florence, you surely have known what has been within my heart."

To this appeal she made no response, but sat a while considering what she would say respecting Mountjoy Scarborough and his affairs.

"Am I to keep all this a secret?" she asked him at last.

"You shall consider that for yourself. I have not exacted from you any silence on the matter. You may tell whom you please, and I shall not consider that I have any ground of complaint against you. Of course for my own sake I do not wish it to be told. A great injury was done me, and I do not desire to be dragged into this which would be another injury. I suspect that Augustus Scarborough knows more than he pretends, and I do not wish to be brought into the mess by his cunning. Whether you will tell your mother you must judge yourself."

"I shall tell nobody unless you bid me."

At that moment the door of the room was opened, and Mrs. Mountjoy entered with a frown upon her brow. She had not yet given up all hope that Mountjoy might

return, and that the affairs of Tretton might be made to straighten themselves.

"Mamma, Mr. Annesley is here."

"So I perceive, my dear."

"I have come to your daughter, to tell her how dearly I love her," said Harry boldly.

"Mr. Annesley, you should have come to me before speaking to my daughter."

"Then I shouldn't have seen her at all."

"You should have left that as it might be. It is not at all a proper thing that a young gentleman should come and address a young lady in this way behind her only parent's back."

"I asked for you, and I did not know that you would not be at home."

"You should have gone away at once—at once. You know how terribly the family is cut up by this great misfortune to our cousin Mountjoy. Mountjoy Scarborough has been long engaged to Florence."

"No, mamma; no, never."

"At any rate, Mr. Annesley knows all about it. And that knowledge ought to have kept him away at the present moment. I must beg him to leave us now."

Then Harry took his hat and departed; but he had great consolation in feeling that Florence had not repudiated his love, which she certainly would have done had she not loved him in return. She had spoke no word of absolute encouragement, but there had been much more of encouragement than of repudiation in her manner.

CHAPTER VII. HARRY ANNESLEY GOES TO TRETTON.

HARRY had promised to go down to Tretton, and, when the time came, Augustus Scarborough did not allow him to escape from the visit. He explained to him that in his father's state of health there would be no company to entertain him; that there was only a maiden sister of his father's staying in the house, and that he intended to take down into the country with him one Septimus Jones, who occupied chambers on the same floor with him in London, and whom Annesley knew to be young Scarborough's most intimate friend. "There will be a little shooting," he said, "and I have bought two or three horses, which you and Jones can ride. Cannock Chase is one of the prettiest parts of England, and as you care for scenery, you can get some amusement out of that. You'll see my father, and hear no doubt

what he has got to say for himself. He is not in the least reticent in speaking about my brother's affairs." There was a good deal in this which was not agreeable. Miss Scarborough was sister to Mrs. Mountjoy as well as to the squire, and had been one of the family party most anxious to assure the marriage of Florence and the captain. The late General Mountjoy had been supposed to be a great man in his way, but had died before Tretton had become as valuable as it was now. Hence the eldest son had been christened with his name, and much of the Mountjoy prestige still clung to the family. But Harry did not care much about the family, except as far as Florence was concerned. And then he had not been on peculiarly friendly terms with Septimus Jones, who had always been submissive to Augustus; and, now that Augustus was a rich man and could afford to buy horses, was likely to be more submissive than ever.

He went down to Tretton alone early in September, and when he reached the house he found that the two young men were out shooting. He asked for his own room, but was instead immediately taken to the old squire whom he found lying on a couch in a small dressing-room, while his sister who had been reading to him was by his side. After the usual greetings Harry made some awkward apology as to his intrusion at the sick man's bedside. "Why, I ordered them to bring you in here," said the squire; "you can't very well call that intrusion. I have no idea of being shut up from the world before they nail me down in my coffin."

"That will be a long time first we all hope," said his sister.

"Bother! you hope it, but I don't know that anyone else does; I don't for one. And if I did, what's the good of hoping? I have a couple of diseases, either of which is enough to kill a horse." Then he mentioned his special maladies in a manner which made Harry shrink. "What are they talking about in London just at present?" he asked.

"Just the old set of subjects," said Harry.

"I suppose they have got tired of me and my iniquities." Harry could only smile and shake his head. "There has been such a complication of romances that one expects the story to run a little more than the ordinary nine days."

"Men still do talk about Mountjoy."

"And what are they saying? Augustus

declares that you are especially interested on the subject."

"I don't know why I should be," said Harry.

"Nor I either. When a fellow becomes no longer of any service to either man, woman, or beast, I do not know why any should take an interest in him. I suppose you didn't lend him money?"

"I was not likely to do that, sir."

"Then I cannot conceive how it can interest you whether he be in London or Kamschatka. It does not interest me the least in the world. Were he to turn up here, it would be a trouble; and yet they expect me to subscribe largely to a fund for finding him. What good could he do me if he were found?"

"Oh, John, he is your son," said Miss Scarborough.

"And would be just as good a son as Augustus, only that he has turned out uncommonly badly. I have not the slightest feeling in the world as to his birth, and so I think I showed pretty plainly. But nothing could stop him in his course, and therefore I told the truth, that's all." In answer to this, Harry found it quite impossible to say a word; but got away to his bedroom and dressed for dinner as quickly as possible.

While he was still thus employed, Augustus came into the room still dressed in his shooting-clothes. "So you've seen my father," he said.

"Yes; I saw him."

"And what did he say to you about Mountjoy?"

"Little or nothing that signifies. He seems to think it unreasonable that he should be asked to pay for finding him, seeing that the creditors expect to get the advantage of his presence when found."

"He is about right there."

"Oh yes; but still he is his father. It may be that it would be expected that he should interest himself in finding him."

"Upon my word I don't agree with you. If a thousand a year could be paid to keep Mountjoy out of the way I think it would be well expended."

"But you were acting with the police."

"Oh, the police! What do the police know about it? Of course I talk it all over with them. They have not the smallest idea where the man is, and do not know how to go to work to discover him. I don't say that my father is judicious in his brazen-faced opposition to all enquiry. He should pretend to be a little anxious—

as I do. Not that there would be any use now in pretending to keep up appearances. He has declared himself utterly indifferent to the law, and has defied the world. Never mind, old fellow, we shall eat the more dinner, only I must go and prepare myself for it."

At dinner Harry found only Septimus Jones, Augustus Scarborough, and his aunt. Miss Scarborough said a good deal about her brother, and declared him to be much better, "Of course you know, Augustus, that Sir William Brodrick was down here for two days."

"Only fancy," replied he, "what one has to pay for two days of Sir William Brodrick in the country."

"What can it matter?" said the generous spinster.

"It matters exactly so many hundred pounds; but no one will begrudge it if he does so many hundred pounds' worth of good."

"It will show, at any rate, that we have had the best advice," said the lady.

"Yes, it will show; that is exactly what people care about. What did Sir William say?" Then during the first half of dinner a prolonged reference was made to Mr. Scarborough's maladies, and to Sir William's opinion concerning them. Sir William had declared that Mr. Scarborough's constitution was the most wonderful thing that he had ever met in his experience. In spite of the fact that Mr. Scarborough's body was one mass of cuts and bruises, and faulty places, and that nothing would keep him going except the wearing of machinery which he was unwilling to wear; yet the facilities for much personal enjoyment were left to him, and Sir William declared that if he would only do exactly as he were told, he might live for the next five years. "But everybody knows that he won't do anything that he is told," said Augustus in a tone of voice which by no means expressed extreme sorrow.

From his father he led the conversation to the partridges, and declared his conviction that with a little trouble and some expense, a very good head of game might be got up at Tretton. "I suppose it wouldn't cost much," said Jones, who beyond ten shillings to a gamekeeper never paid sixpence for whatever shooting came in his way.

"I don't know what you call much," said Augustus, "but I think it may be done for three or four hundred a year. I

should like to calculate how many thousand partridges at that rate Sir William has taken back in his pocket."

"What does it matter?" asked Miss Scarborough.

"Only as a speculation. Of course my father, while he lives, is justified in giving his whole income to doctors if he likes it; but one gets into a manner of speaking about him as though he had done a good deal with his money in which he was not justified."

"Don't talk in that way, Augustus."

"My dear aunt, I am not at all inclined to be more open-mouthed than he is. Only reflect what it was that he was disposed to do to me, and the good-humour with which I have borne it!"

"I think I should hold my tongue about it," said Harry Annesley.

"And I think that in my place you would do no such thing. To your nature it would be almost impossible to hold your tongue. Your sense of justice would be so affronted that you would feel yourself compelled to discuss the injury done to you with all your intimate friends. But with your father your quarrel would be eternal. I make nothing of it, and indeed if he pertinaciously held his tongue on the subject, so should I."

"But because he talks," said Harry, "why should you?"

"Why should he not?" said Septimus Jones. "Upon my word I don't see the justice of it."

"I am not speaking of justice, but of feeling."

"Upon my word I wish you would hold your tongues about it; at any rate till my back is turned," said the old lady.

Then Augustus finished the conversation. "I am determined to treat it all as though it were a joke, and, as a joke, one to be spoken of lightly. It was a strong measure, certainly, this attempt to rob me of twenty or thirty thousand pounds a year. But it was done in favour of my brother, and therefore let it pass. I am at a loss to conceive what my father has done with his money. He hasn't given Mountjoy, at any rate, more than a half of his income for the last five or six years, and his own personal expenses are very small. Yet he tells me that he has the greatest difficulty in raising a thousand pounds, and positively refuses in his present difficulties to add above five hundred a year to my former allowance. No father, who had thoroughly done his duty by his

son, could speak in a more fixed and austere manner. And yet he knows that every shilling will be mine as soon as he goes." The servant who was waiting upon them had been in and out of the room while this was said, and must have heard much of it. But to that Augustus seemed to be quite indifferent. And, indeed, the whole family story was known to every servant in the house. It is true that gentlemen and ladies who have servants do not usually wish to talk about their private matters before all the household, even though the private matters may be known; but this household was unlike all others in that respect. There was not a housemaid about the rooms, or a groom in the stables, who did not know how terrible a reprobate their master had been.

"You will see your father before you go to bed?" Miss Scarborough said to her nephew as she left the room.

"Certainly, if he will send to say that he wishes it."

"He does wish it, most anxiously."

"I believe that to be your imagination. At any rate I will come—say in an hour's time. He would be just as pleased to see Harry Annesley for the matter of that, or Mr. Grey, or the inspector of police. Any one whom he could shock, or pretend to shock by the peculiarity of his opinions, would do as well." By that time, however, Miss Scarborough had left the room.

Then the three men sat and talked, and discussed the affairs of the family generally. New leases had just been granted for adding manufactories to the town of Tretton; and as far as outward marks of prosperity went, all was prosperous. "I expect to have a water-mill on the lawn before long," said Augustus. "These mechanics have it all their own way. If they were to come and tell me that they intended to put up a windmill in my bedroom to-morrow morning, I could only take off my hat to them. When a man offers you five per cent. where you've only had four, he is instantly your lord and master. It doesn't signify how vulgar he is or how insolent, or how exacting. Associations of the tenderest kind must all give way to trade. But the shooting which lies to the north and west of us is, I think, safe for the present. I suppose I must go and see what my father wants or I shall be held to have neglected my duty to my affectionate parent."

"Capital fellow, Augustus Scarborough,"

said Jones as soon as their host had left them.

"I was at Cambridge with him, and he was popular there."

"He'll be more popular now that he's the heir to Tretton. I don't know any fellow that I can get along better with than Scarborough. I think you were a little hard upon him about his father, you know."

"In his position he ought to hold his tongue."

"It's the strangest thing that has turned up in the whole course of my experience. You see, if he didn't talk about it people wouldn't quite understand what it was that his father has done. It's only matter of report now, and the creditors, no doubt, do believe that when old Scarborough goes off the hooks they will be able to walk in and take possession. Augustus has got to make the world think that he is the heir, and that will go a long way. You may be sure he doesn't talk as he does without having a reason for it. He's the last man I know to do anything without a reason."

The evening dragged along very slowly while Jones continued to tell all that he knew of his friend's character. But Augustus Scarborough did not return, and soon after ten o'clock, when Harry Annesley could smoke no more cigars, and declared that he had no wish to begin upon brandy-and-water after his wine, he went to his bed.

AT GWENNAP PIT.

AFTER a series of strong gales that blew the fowls of the air in every direction but the one in which they wanted to go, that whirled young plants and newly-sown seeds out of the earth, that took the hair off our heads, and the breath out of our bodies; after this bitter gusty experience, "Monday in Whitsun week" dawned upon us this year on the North Coast of Cornwall with a sunny calmness which made us gasp.

The change from howling blasts, bearing on their wings every conceivable neuralgic ache that has as yet been developed, to something distinctly suggestive of warmth and brightness, was so unexpected and startling that for a while bewilderment reigned, and we were hazy as to what it would be wisest to do with so abnormally fine a day. Fortunately for us, a friend who has grown accustomed to the caprices

of climate in Cornwall, was at hand with a suggestion.

"Go to Gwennap Pit, and see a great representative Cornish gathering to hear a distinguished preacher who has been sent down by the Wesleyan Conference."

To Gwennap Pit accordingly we drove. At first along the straight tolerably level Truro road, trimmed on either side with a golden border of broom, then into a cross-road which wound up and down several precipices, then passed Scorrier House and Tregulow, oases in this desert, and then on and on into the heart of the mining activity about St. Day.

At every turn of the erratic road it seemed strangely enough that Carn Brae, and its uninteresting monument, stared us in the face. And for a time we thought this was what we had come out into the wilderness to see, for, until we reached St. Day, there were no signs of a gathering of the clans in any direction.

But at St. Day unusual excitement began clearly to manifest itself. From every branch road and by-way, well-dressed, well-behaved crowds poured themselves into the common stream which was rapidly flowing towards Gwennap Pit. Omnibuses, coaches, waggonettes, carriages, phaetons, traps of every description from all the towns and villages in Cornwall, were pressing backwards and forwards in the narrow lane that leads to the Pit without cessation. It required great tact, good temper, and a steady hand on the reins when two vehicles met. There was frequently but the traditional hair's-breadth between the wheels, and as the lane was bounded on the one side by a deep and dirty ditch, and on the other by very jagged stony places, the possibility of an upset had its terrors.

Presently we gained our bourn, and having tethered our horses to a couple of little boys, we made our way through what looked like the fringe of a fair—stalls, whereon were displayed every sort of sweetstuff abomination that is confectioned in the rural districts, abounded. One of these was kept by a doggel bard, who addressed this distich to us as we passed:

Come in here for ginger beer,
The next's the shop for ginger pop.

Not being acquainted with the delicate difference which evidently exists between the "beer" and "pop," we were unable to decide on either, and so went on under the blazing sun, thirsty, to the edge of the Pit.

There must have been seven or eight

thousand people in this huge basin, and hundreds more were packed tightly together around its rim. The Pit is perfectly round, and slopes gradually, basin-wise, to a great depth. On Whit Monday not a single blade of the beautiful bright green turf which is smoothly pasted all over it was visible, by reason of the densely-packed masses who were keeping holiday in this good and gentle fashion.

All classes were here from the richest to the poorest, from the luxuriously idle to the hardest grimest workers. All were well-dressed and strikingly clean. The wives and daughters of the Cornish miners array themselves not only well but tastefully. There were scores of babies here, brought because their mothers would come to hear the great Wesleyan preacher, and there are no crèches in the country villages wherein the babies can be deposited. The majority of these babies were embroidered from head to foot, we noticed. For the Cornish women are deft with the needle, and in this good-hearted land it is not the custom to shoe the horse, and shoe the mare, and let the little colt go bare.

They were singing a hymn, when at last we gained the edge of the Pit. Music is at home in all Cornish hearts, and on all Cornish lips, and the blending of thousands of voices had a grand effect in the open air. Then the preacher, standing mid-way up the side of the basin, with a rail in front of him to save him from tumbling headlong down upon his hearers, and a friend behind him holding an umbrella over his head to save it from the sun, began:

"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stones, made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building."

And from this text he preached to his listening thousands a fine and eloquent discourse.

Throughout he was listened to with quiet deep attention. The spirit of old John Wesley, who inaugurated this annual meeting at Gwennap Pit, must have rejoiced at hearing such sound doctrine preached by one of his followers, and at seeing how devoutly it was received.

There were many of the most advanced clergy and church-people in the neighbourhood present, and all religious party feeling and contemptible exhibition of rivalry was absent.

As a rule the Cornish people are most successfully appealed to through their emotions. Their dissenting preachers and teachers stir up their feelings and bring them to howls and tears, to groans and ejaculations, which sound very blasphemous to the uninitiated. But about this one who addressed them on Whitsun Monday at Gwennap Pit there was a quiet, earnest, unemotional force that would have commanded respect from the most rabid bigot.

There was a good deal that was grand about that gathering, we could not help feeling. Fresh from experiences of London crowds reeking with dirt and drunkenness and foul language, this silent, reverential, sober, cleanly multitude compelled one's respect. All was as free, clear, and pure as the air which came sweeping up to us from the great Atlantic.

It is hard after seeing such a representative assemblage as this to realise that the Cornish dissenters are narrow, bigoted, and self-righteous to the extent they are. They have always been celebrated for their wrestling feats. Cock-fighting has commended itself to them. But of other forms of pleasure the dissenting soul is intolerant. The old hard, uncompromising, beauty-hating, pleasure-abhorring spirit permeates them still.

An old man, who had been drawn to the bosom of Mother Church after long years of entreaty and solicitation, had been a steady communicant for many years, when a cricket club was started in the village. To this the schoolmaster and one of the choir belonged. And the steady communicant ceased to present himself.

On being remonstrated with, he gave his reasons frankly:

"I can't come to them ere rails while them ere two crickets come, sir," he said with decision. Then he added: "For if there's one thing that du stink in the Almighty's nostrils more than another, it's they there crickets."

After the recent brutalities which were freely practised at Camborn between the Irish settlers and the resident Cornishmen, this may seem a strange statement to make—namely, that there is great sympathy and similarity between the Irish and Cornish character. The spirit of the ancient Celt is alive in both. They have the same cat-like love of place, the same fixed idea as to their own superiority over every other race under the sun, the same brilliant pugnaciousness,

the same power of dawdling away the hours in which stern necessity does not compel them to work, the same graceful gift of "rounding" upon any one suddenly who has unadvisedly wounded them on any tender point. But we thankfully observe (being resident among these Cornish folk) they have not the same bloodthirsty spirit which is the current characteristic trait of the "finest peasantry on earth."

Nor have they the Irish veneration for old relics. Cornwall abounds with grand mementoes of the time when the true faith reigned and was honoured. Wayside crosses, some of them grandly sculptured, are to be found in every direction. But we never see the knee bent or even the head bowed as the wayfarer, or miner, or labourer passes by the cross, even if it has the image of our Lord graven upon it.

METROPOLITAN HARROW.

THERE are elements of the picturesque about the Underground, the picturesqueness of an Inferno perhaps, but still something that takes the imagination. But about Baker Street, which is perhaps the stuffiest and chokiest of all the Underground stations, there is, in partial compensation, a glimpse to be had of a quite pretty and remarkable scene. Opening out, as it seems, into the very bowels of the earth, as if there were a duplicate world in existence, and this the entrance to it, is a cave full of dim hazy light, with people waiting and engines spouting steam, and just a touch of unreality about it, suggesting whether it is not after all a reflection of ourselves and our surroundings seen in the dim glass of some magic mirror. Perhaps it is a pity to break the charm of such uncertainty by putting it to the test of experience. This is the first time I have done such a thing, this sunny Sunday in April, with a ticket for Harrow in my pocket which bids me change at Baker Street. Even the actual experience of hurrying along underground passages and finding at the end of them another Metropolitan Station, the very fellow to the one just left, with the same posters and the same advertisements, even this gives a feeling of wonder and unreality. Can this actually be the way to the sunny and pleasant country? Are we not rather bound to some subterranean coal-cellars, where clanking and groaning and shrieking are going on continually?

But sunshine comes at last as the town shades off into the country, the long arms of London stretching out here and there, and clutching morsel after morsel of the green fields. Here a stream is crossed and there a country road, the hedges showing a delicate tint of green, the trees coming out—the early ones—the horse-chestnuts shaking out their plumes, and the beeches showing feathery points of green. A pleasant country enough it seemed, with brick-fields, and streaked with builders' terraces; still the only remarkable thing about it that it should be found so near Baker Street. At Neasden we seem to slip into an embryo Crewe—a railway town of the future—only existent as yet in long rows of engine sheds. Soon after we run up to Harrow, with as little fuss as if it were Aldgate.

To Harrow, yes, but not to Harrow-on-the-hill. The hill is still before us, with its church at the top.

It is a long pull up to the town, and alps on alps arise before the church is reached: the church that overtops everything, with a clear look-out from the mound on which it is built, over the country for miles around. The bell has ceased when we were toiling half-way up, and service has already begun, and opening the church door we find ourselves in presence of a church full of people. But there is a kind of hospitality still exercised in country churches, and we are soon provided with seats. A fine old church a good deal restored, but altogether a handsome specimen of a country church, with a very fine wooden roof in the nave, supported by well-wrought figures of saints and martyrs, that stand on grotesquely carved brackets. Very pleasant it is to listen to the singing boys and singing men, the church flooded with sunshine and filled with people. Hodge, the ploughman, hardly to be made out, nor his wife; but the little girls plainly to be seen in a quaint little gallery peeping out from the archways of the columns. It is Palm Sunday, but I don't see anything of the palms. Do the children anywhere now gather the willow branches, with the soft catkins, and call them palms? Not probably on any of the stations of the Metropolitan Railway.

There is the marvel of it. Is it possible that one can say one's prayers in this quite rural and pleasant fashion, and that by means of a return ticket from Baker Street? It would not do to hint such a

thing at Harrow. I fancy if we were known to be metropolitan excursionists, we should be shown to the door, or at all events moved to the most draughty of the free seats. One feels that Harrow is an arbitrary place, and quite capable of persecuting a stranger. The spirit of Queen Elizabeth seems to haunt the place, and Elizabeth we know was an arrant tyrant. I can see peeping over at me from his niche in the wall of the north transept, a long-visaged man, with a beard and a ruff, who looks capable of anything in the way of arbitrary exercise of authority; and there are quite Elizabethan beards among the officiating clergy. Happily no one comes forward to denounce us and the service pursues its course.

The church is well stored with monuments—to head masters, to the rural gentry. Here too is buried Samuel Garth, sometime poet and physician, a connecting-link between Dryden, whose body, it is said, he rescued from hungry creditors and put in the way of an honourable burial in Westminster Abbey—between Dryden, I say, and Pope, who forbore to lash the kindly physician with the biting scourge of his satire. And Garth, after all, is not by any means dull. He was reckoned a wit in his own day, and was an original Kit-Kat and turner of epigrams. You might read his Dispensary, skipping a good deal, with a certain amount of pleasure, if you had the time, and stumble now and then on felicitous lines that later and lazier poets seem to have cribbed from.

But the lion monument of Harrow is of course that to John Lyon, the founder of the Free Grammar School. There is something sweetly naïve about the "Free," as connected with Harrow School, by the way. Strange fate for the foundation of the humble yeoman, aiming chiefly to benefit his own town and the poor thereabout! For the school has certainly swallowed the town, and as for the poor—well, perhaps they gain more from John Lyon's bounty than appears on the surface.

By this time the service is over and the congregation are streaming out, while under the towers are penned up, waiting till the way is clear for them, Hodge's little boys and the rest, with their little knickers made out of daddy's breeches.

There are some comfortable benches planted just outside the churchyard, with a sunny southern aspect, where it is pleasant to sit, the country spreading far and wide at your feet in a kind of sleepy

quiet, with the soft haze of spring over everything. We would not have it any brighter, however, even for a sight of the towers of Windsor, which are to be made out to the south-west when the day is clear, for the misty landscape showing through the trees has all the charm of uncertainty, and harmonises with the vague promises of spring, with the trees that are neither green nor dry, but thickened in every twig with the coming growth of summer.

And sitting in the sunshine, sheltered by the church from the wind that blows keenly on these heights, one wonders vaguely how people came to build a church so high up, with such additional labour and sorrow in the way of dragging up stone and timber. Except that perhaps there was once upon a time a thick forest all round, as the "weald" just below would seem to signify, with many a swamp and quagmire formed by the lazy Brent, and this hill the only clearing for miles and miles, with some rude church of timber erected by early "home missionaries" from Canterbury as a gathering-place for swineherds and foresters. And as to how the hill and its church fared after that, some kind of hint is given in the name of the place, which was anciently Herges, suggesting as a root the "here," or army—a word, according to the editor of *The Saxon Chronicle*, applied exclusively to the marauding bands of Danish invaders who devastated the land in the ninth and tenth centuries. And this is just the kind of place that would suit them as a camp of refuge and a depôt for plunder; no doubt knocking on the head the little colony of cenobites that served the church. And then, when the heathen wave was spent, and churches and monasteries were rising from their ashes, the church at Herges would undergo restoration—no heavy task in those primitive days, when posts and wattles smeared with mud—all articles supplied in plenty from the neighbourhood—were the ordinary building materials.

All the while Canterbury keeps its hold upon the place—the archbishop has a residence here and is lord of the manor—after the Conquest building a fair church of stone, whose pillars still remain in the existing church; and coming down to the thirteenth century, we find Thomas A'Becket keeping open house here and feasting with the Abbot of St. Albans, all reckless of the king's displeasure, which was soon to cost him so dear. And Canterbury kept

its manors here till the time of the Reformation, when they came into the possession of Bluff King Hal, whose portrait, very bluff and jolly, struck us just as we left the station, hanging up as a roadside sign. But King Hal gave away these manors in his bluff reckless way to Sir Edward North, a great devourer of Church lands, and after that their history would only interest a conveyancer.

But it is chilly sitting still, and so we descend with the rest of the world to the High Street, conveniently built upon the ridge of the hill that slopes gently down almost due south, to the full blaze of the sunshine, delightful now, but an arid region one would think in the heat of summer. A fine street with big handsome houses, many of them school buildings, curiously wired in as to the windows, with curly-headed boys looking through like squirrels in a cage.

The sunny High Street is all a swarm with people, the Harrow boys a considerable element in the crowd, in their classic public school costume of round jackets and top hats. The bigger boys, however, are doomed to wear swallow-tails—ridiculous garments, neither fish nor flesh nor honest red-herring—but which custom no doubt inexorably prescribes. Honest John Lyon might be proud of his scholars perhaps could he be permitted to visit the world once more; but I doubt whether his boys would be proud of him, if they met him lounging about in his smock frock and leather gaiters.

And yet he was a liberal-minded man in his day that John Lyon, seeing how in the scheme he drew up two years before his death, he directed to be built "a large and convenient schoole-house with a chimney in it." The chimney for halls and such-like places being then rather a modern luxury, and the old-fashioned plan of a hole in the roof to let the smoke out still favoured by many. But John means that his scholars and their masters shall be warm and cosy, and to that end he wills that they shall have "a cellar under the said roomes and schoole-house to lay in wood and coales." On the other hand he would have the master and usher of the school both clerks (that is, priests) and unmarried. But we know that there was, long after the Reformation, a strong prejudice against the married clergy, and that Queen Elizabeth herself could not be brought to be civil to a parson's wife. And then, as Master John only contemplated a salary of some

thirty pounds a year for his schoolmaster—in fact, he didn't mean to endow young women, so much is plainly the thought of honest John Lyon.

But if of a celibate turn, John, the Yeoman, is not too ascetic. His boys must play sometimes, and he allows driving a top, tossing a hand ball, running, and shooting—this last being with bows and arrows, and he enjoins that parents shall furnish their children with bow-strings, shafts, and bresters—and this schedule liberally interpreted may be made to include all the games in which the youth of this present century take delight.

The founder of Harrow had no notion of building anything beyond a plain and simple school-house, and nothing grandiose seems to have been attempted since his day, but the whole of Harrow does duty for the school, with a few shops and inns, rather tolerated than encouraged. But villas and rows of shops are springing up all about; soon the road between Harrow and Paddington will be one long high street, and there is the Metropolitan station at the bottom of the hill, with its half-hourly trains to Baker Street. Clearly Harrow is destined to become suburban, let the chiefs and governors of the school struggle against it as they may. In the meantime, however, the outposts are vigilantly guarded against the invading army of Londoners. It would be difficult for a stray Sunday excursionist to get even a bun in Harrow. All doors are shut against him, except those kept open by Act of Parliament.

And yet the walk, pleasant as it is, sharpens up the appetite—a pleasant walk gradually bringing us to the general level of the country, with green fields about, and bright sunshine, and the songs of birds. And there are funny little suburbs all about, the nucleus of which is generally a public-house, with a swinging sign in front, and a good draught of beer going on, but not inviting for a wayfarer. Then from a field hard by, a lark rises soaring and singing.

There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine,
Up with me, up with me, high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Certainly I feel light enough to soar, and there is no other banqueting-place within sight. The wind is high, and it snatches out of my hand and sends soaring after the lark the map to which I have trusted for piloting the way. But, while

the lark is still soaring, the map descends softly and gently into the greensward. There is an impenetrable hedge between, filled with the toughest and most stubborn thorn-bushes. The field, too, is enormous, with only one practicable entrance in somebody's poultry-yard in a distant hamlet. I am not going back for it, certainly, and so walk away, not refreshed in spirit by the little episode. But farther on we meet some boys—local boys, not top-hatters—to whom we explain the predicament. "A big field with chickens in it? I know; it's Perkins's," cried one, and presently they are all scudding off in search, and soon return, scratched but triumphant. A few pennies, however, go a long way towards happiness with boys. The article becomes much more expensive as you go on in life; still, you come across it occasionally without much expense, as with us when, a little farther on, we behold the banqueting-place of our dreams—a little rural inn, with a horse-trough and a highly-respectable and ecclesiastical sign on the other side of the road, with pigeons, too, fluttering and cooing on the roof; and here there is a sanded parlour, with old-fashioned wooden chairs ranged about the room in serried ranks, all polished to exceeding brightness by the constant rubbing of generations of the rude forefathers of the hamlet. With a shining mahogany table, too, in the centre; with the Buckinghamshire Chronicle and the Harrow Gazette thereupon, and an illustrated paper with portraits of the winning crew of yesterday's boat-race; and better still, purveyed by a cheerful and ready youth, a crust and cheese—or rather, "two crustes and cheese," as the youth, in quite Chaucerian dialect, remarks.

When we have taken our meal and passed on, the day has parted with some of its brightness. The country strikes one as rather tough and solid at the bottom, decked out as it may be in the fresh greenness of springtime; the hills, too, somewhat heavy in contour—perhaps a general characteristic of the London clay. Still, with a fine windy sky and noble cloud-masses, the sun bursting out here and there, Harrow, upon its hill, with its spire seeking the skies, looks quite noble and imposing in the shadow of a huge massive cloud, and thrown out against a white luminous horizon. All the same, it is pleasant to strike upon the Metropolitan Railway, with Baker Street visible, to the eye of faith, in the far distance.

DUAL LIFE.

SOFT and sound he sleeps, my dear,
Dark fringed lids o'er tired eyes;
Strong hands, thrown in utter rest,
Quiet on the quiet breast;
Firm lips half fallen in smile apart,
And the pulsing of the heart
Scarcely fans my cheek who watch
The flutter of his breath to catch,
So very still he lies.

Soft and sound he sleeps, outworn,
By the fret and strife
Of the eager hours that fill
Each long day of good or ill;
Of gallant battle for the truth;
Of fiery thoughts of gifted youth;
Of fighting often hand to hand,
With fate he cannot understand,
For full and hard his life.

Soft and sound! No restless dreams
Trouble his repose;
Yet, while the form exhausted sleeps,
The spirit somewhere vigil keeps;
For he who lives, and loves, and makes,
His impress on each thing he takes,
To shape, or change, or mould at will,
He does not lie there dumb and still,
As that his servant does.

Soft and sound it sleeps, while he
Breaks his prison bars,
Perchance to soar on fearless wings,
And in unconscious wanderings,
To hold communion full and free
With the beloved we may not see,
Till all our earthly race is run,
Beyond the moon, beyond the sun,
Beyond the great white stars.

Soft and sound, the while I creep
Noiseless ever, near;
My soul is captive as I sit
In the warm frame that waits with it,
And watch o'er him I love the best,
Half jealous of the tranquil rest
That sets his spirit free to rove
Somewhere—where I with all my love,
May scarcely follow, dear.

Soft and sound! My fingers glide
Into your nerveless hold;
Beside your head my own I lay,
I try to call your soul away,
Whate'er the holy haunts it seeks,
My will, its passionate summons speaks;
My love, and all its royal might,
I clothe my call in strength to-night.
Darling, will you obey?

SUMMER ISLES OF EDEN.

"WHAT a lot of water there is in the world," is the thought which comes into one's head when one looks at a map and sees the Pacific stretching north and south and east and west, thousands of miles, only broken by little pin-points of island groups. You know those maps which cut the globe into two hemispheres, the one with London for its centre, the other with its centre somewhere outside New Zealand? The former half seems to take up almost all the land on the surface of our planet. The latter is nearly all water; so that, if

ever New Zealand takes England's place man will have to be much more of an amphibious animal than he now is; some bonâ fide remedy for sea-sickness, available for poor as well as rich, will have to be discovered, unless indeed the race in its development conquers sea-sickness, or at any rate makes it harmless, just as on civilised man measles and some other diseases, which play the mischief with savages, generally fall very lightly.

And how about this land of which there is so little down there? Is it sinking or rising? Are these scattered islands the mountain peaks of a submerged continent; or are they the first shoots of the land that is to be? Who can tell?

But, sinking or rising (and the former would best suit the sad but certain dying out of the natives of every group), how unlike this island-world is to our Old Continents! Byron, though he hadn't the advantage of our modern travel books, describes it in his *Island* with all a poet's insight. He pictured these islands to himself as they are; he saw the children of Nature, "living careless, quiet, and secure," like the men of Laish before the Jews fell upon them, a race of do-as-you-likes, while the kindly sun "baked their unadulterated loaves in rich profusion in those happy groves." But we have not all of us Byron's poetic insight; we want to have the picture fully filled in before we can form a judgment about it. Therefore let those who want to know what Tahiti and the Samoan Islands, and Torga, and the rest, are like, read how Miss Gordon Cumming went the round in a French man-of-war, and saw everything, and sat at native feasts crowned with native garlands, and heard native songs—got to closer quarters with the people, in short, than any white person, except a missionary, has ever done.

Some of us know her home in Fiji, which islands she thinks deserve to be called "the earthly Paradise." While she was in Fiji she had as tempting an offer as was ever, in our modern times, made to a travel-loving Scot. The French are great, and want to be still greater, in the Pacific. They have long held Tahiti—got it in no very creditable way, breaking poor Queen Pomare's heart, worrying chief-missionary Pritchard past bearing, giving English missionary reports something to rave about for many a month. They have the Marquesas and the Gambiers, and have recently seized Raiatea, and threaten Huahine and the Austral

and Harvey groups. In Samoa there are potent German trading firms which cry "Hands off!" and will keep the group independent if it does not suit Prince Bismarck to annex it. But everywhere else between New Zealand and South America the French have got all the good harbours and coaling stations, with a view, Miss Cumming thinks, of monopolising the Pacific trade as soon as the Panama Canal is finished. We are not much alarmed at rumours of French trade-monopoly. Even in their older colonies comparatively little of the trade is in their own hands; but Miss Cumming patriotically denounces French aggression, though she was very glad to accept the offer of the Bishop of Samoa, Monseigneur Elloi, and take a berth in the *Seignelay*, the warlike mission ship which was to take him round his diocese.

Two delightful volumes, each of three hundred pages, and not a bit too long, are the result of her voyage. She travelled *en princesse*; the officers, "a particularly gentlemanly set," vied with one another in making her comfortable; the best cabin was given up to her; one officer lent a beautifully-carved mirror; another gave flower-vases of black Chilian pottery; another a library of French and English books, and so on. She liked the manners on board. The officers behaved to the captain like cordial sons to a genial father; and the frank kindliness with which sub-officers and men were addressed sounded as unusual as it was pleasant. Then the fare was even better than on the "*Messageries*," and the *vin ordinaire*, pumped up from huge vats to fill the little barrels containing eight men's daily allowance, must be as much more wholesome than rum as the cabin cookery was superior to the too heavy fare of even well-found British vessels.

From Fiji to Tonga seems a very short run, as "runs" go on the Pacific. Tonga has got the blessings of civilisation in the shape of stiring villas, painted white or bright green, and roofed with zinc. "The effect is that of an ugly new English watering-place"—a poor exchange for the native houses of reeds or plaited cocoa-nut leaves, deeply thatched with wild sugar-cane. Wesleyans were the earliest missionaries (they began with a martyrdom; a wicked white—"beach-comber," runaway sailor—persuaded the king they were wizards, who had brought an epidemic which broke out just then), and Wesleyans, as we know

from the chapels that spoil so many Welsh landscapes, are not great in architecture.

Miss Cumming, however, was the guest of the "sisters," French and Irish, and on Sunday attended pontifical high mass, at which the gorgeous copes and other vestments reminded her of a great Buddhist "function." She was shocked to see that many of the Tonga men were got up in broadcloth, while some of the girls wore gaudy hats with artificial flowers, and had on huge crinolines. This, too, she traces to Wesleyan influence. The early missionaries used to insist on breeches in church instead of mats, and on bonnets of the then prevailing coal-scuttle fashion. Hence the idea that to dress after the English fashion is a mark of a perfect Christian. In church architecture the Roman Catholics have wisely gone back to the old Tonga type—heavy thatch, and posts and beams worked in "sennit," i.e., different coloured fibres of cocoa-palm, hibiscus, etc., and an altar of curious native woods, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl.

How did the old Tongas ever manage, with their stone adzes, to carve the huge blocks of basalt which they had brought in their frail canoes all the way from Walli's Island to form the tombs of their kings? More curious than these tombs is the huge dolman eighteen feet long, fifteen high, twelve wide, like one of the Stonehenge trilithons, only the impost is mortised into the uprights. There is a tradition about it, though till lately an enormous kava bowl stood on the impost, and the solemn drinking feasts were held round it, just as in Brittany, and even in North Britain, there are still annual festivals "at the stones." Have these stones, everywhere such a hopeless riddle to the archaeologist, really come down from pre-glacial days, when the climate and vegetation of our islands were much like those of the Pacific groups? And are the Kanakas (South Sea Islanders) a remnant of that pre-glacial race which in Europe the ice-cloak killed out or drove southward as it crept down over the land, and which was succeeded by those wretched savages whose flints we find in the drift? These Stonehenges of the Pacific naturally make us think of Easter Island, that lone mass of extinct craters, two thousand miles from everywhere, with its platforms of huge square lava blocks, on which stand, or have fallen, colossal images from eighteen to twenty-seven, and even thirty-seven

feet high. Mexican seems the type of feature, and the deeply hollowed eyes were filled, in Mexican fashion, with eye-balls of obsidian. They are of grey lava, with red lava crowns, sixty-six inches across and fifty-two high—the weirdest statues the world has. And the one quarry whence all these were hewn is still full of unfinished statues and crowns ready carved for them. Indeed, the whole isle is as full of carving as an Egyptian tomb; the very seaside rocks are covered with it. Was it once a vast land of which the greater part was suddenly submerged, leaving only the sacred mountain, the Fusiama of its drowned inhabitants? And are the few simple creatures who remain, and who are as unable to give any account of these huge statues as they would be to carve them out or transport them from the quarry to their pedestals, the degenerate descendants of those who managed to escape the cataclysm? Of course, living for ages on poor food (the isle when it was discovered by Captain Cook grew no cocoa-nuts) and brackish water, will easily account for the degeneracy. Apparently the destruction was sudden; the stone houses grouped at one end of the isle, each with its door seaward, are full of slabs carved with hieroglyphics painted black, red, and white, and wooden tablets have been found which some one some day may interpret. The houses are roofed just like those which in Britain and Ireland we attribute to “the old Celt,” the slabs overlapping one another till they gradually close. Of course this does not involve identity of race; for men, under pressure of the same needs, do independently invent the same things in different parts of the world; and Miss Cumming wisely declines to pronounce the aboriginal Javanese identical with the old Easter islanders, on the strength of the huge rock-statues carved in honour of the fire-gods in that strange mixture of glorious vegetation and still active volcanoes. Her opinion is that Easter Island was the Iona of the Pacific; but what a long way those would have to travel who came thither to worship or to be buried!

So much for Pacific pre-historic remains, of which it was best to speak all at once. Stone adzes are not yet pre-historic, though, of course, the manufacture of them has ceased. The people treasure them as talismans, hiding them out of the missionaries’ way, but Miss Cumming managed to get two or three. What patient work

it must have been to make one with only a heavy flint for hammer, and the chance that after it was almost finished a sharp tap would split it, revealing an unsuspected flaw.

One is glad to find that King George of Tonga declines to live in the hotel-like palace that has been built for him, preferring that his home should be “faka Tonga,” arranged in native style. The palace he uses for guests. A prudent king is King George, who keeps his island as neat as a new pin, using for road-making, scavenging, etc., the “hard labour” of evil-doers—for evil-doers there are even in Tonga—the summary punishments of heathen times being commuted for imprisonment. A trifle too martinet-like this king; “a sense of stiffness and over-regulation seemed to pervade life;” and Tonga, too, is very flat, ugly (a contrast to Fiji), and grows no oranges or other delicacies. Some of the rules are absurd, though the missionaries—keen traders—have probably a reason for them. Tappa, native cloth, a delightful fabric, has got into the hands of a “ring,” which had interest enough to get a law passed forbidding, under heavy penalties, its manufacture on more than one day of the week. King George was away on a cruise, says Miss Cumming, when this law was passed; but as it is still unrepealed it seems that the white trader, anxious to sell his calicoes, is stronger than the king. Other laws evidently show missionary influence, and remind us of the New England code. A woman who is caught in her own house without a pinafore is fined two dollars, no matter how ample her petticoat; it costs her three dollars if she ventures unpinafores out of doors. If she is caught smoking she is fined two and a half dollars, and one and a half dollar costs—a severe tax on a people whose very nature is to be always rolling up little cigarettes for themselves and their friends. But the crowning atrocity is fining a man ten dollars for being without a shirt, though wearing a kilt (sulu), which would be full-dress at Government House in Fiji. Miss Cumming tells of a poor lad who was fined for taking off his shirt while fishing; and she lays the consumption which decimates the people to the “hideous foreign clothes which are thrown aside under the friendly veil of night,” while the old coating of oil which must make the skin impervious to the cold drenching dews has been quite given up. One is glad to read in a note

that Tonga has at last broken loose from missionary tutelage; it has a parliament with *bonâ fide* representatives, and, in consequence, the smoking tax is lowered, and people may wear any dress they like, except in the Wesleyan chapel, which no one not in European garb can enter.

At Vavan the cliffs are full of wonderful caves, one being that into which Neuha (in Byron's Island) guided Torquil, a cave

Whose only portal was the keyless wave;
A hollow archway by the sun unseen
Save through the billow's glassy veil of green.

The cave has its legend. A chief's daughter ran away with a commoner, who had discovered the submarine archway when diving after a wounded turtle. Here he kept his love many months, till his comrades tracked him out and carried the poor girl back to her father. Diving so deep is no easy task; only two Englishmen have ever done it—Mariner, the old voyager, who went there to a kawa-party of chieftains, and a ship's captain, who hurt his back fatally against the sharp points of the door. The natives, who are as much at home in the water as seals, turn on their back when they have dived down, and keep themselves off the sharp points with their hands. Besides beating us in diving, the Polynesians beat our forefathers in cloth printing, stamping on their native fabric exceeding beautiful patterns by an arrangement of wooden types.

In Samoa there was the additional excitement of being at the scene of war. The Samoans, Miss Cumming thought, were noble-looking fellows, although they bleach their hair with coral lime. She is catholic-minded enough to admire the effect of oil on a brown skin, making, as the Psalmist testifies, "a cheerful countenance." The fly-flap, which every Samoan M.P. carries over his shoulder, is just like what we have been taught to call a whip in Egyptian pictures.

At Samoa things were in a bad way. Nine years ago the United States took the group under their protection, and sent a consul there. But Colonel Steinborger, who had got four cannon and a Gatling, he said from General Grant, and, stranger still, had been granted a passage on the U.S. man-of-war *Tuscarora*, appeared like a meteor on the isles, stirred up discontented chiefs, and proclaimed one of them king. The United States consul, Mr. Foster, issued a counter proclamation, and, as the *Tuscarora* had sailed away, he claimed the help of H.M.S. *Barracouta*, and of the rest

of the consuls. All except the German representative of the great house of Godefroy, of Hamburg, which has since failed for a million sterling, helped him; and the colonel and his lieutenant, Jonas Coe, were seized, put on board the *Barracouta*, and deported. But this did not arrest the mischief. Lots of Steinborger's men, "white trash," who had found Fiji too hot for them when settled government began with the annexation and Sir A. Gordon's rule, were left, and they set chief against chief, stirring up old strifes, tearing open old tribal feuds; so that when Miss Cumming landed there had been cruel war (the Samoans, though never cannibals, being eager, Dyak-like, to get a good pile of heads), and further war seemed threatening, while round the British flagstaff was gathered a crowd of the beaten party, "orating" all day, and at night consoling themselves with kawa and the real old dances. The usual greeting, "Ole alofa" (great love), seemed rather ironical just then.

Language, by the way, must be a puzzle in the Samoan group. There are three dialects, one for each social rank; and, since ceremonious politeness is the breath of a Samoan's nostrils, a chief, when he speaks of himself, uses the speech of the lowest order, which must increase the linguistic confusion.

Godefroy's house owned twenty-five thousand acres in Samoa, tilled, of course, with forced labour, kidnapped wherever it could be got. How the labourers were obtained, how the missionaries (hated because they told the outer world of what was going on) were thwarted, chiefs being assured that they wrought diseases and bewitched the people, the New Zealand Blue Book for 1874 gives some curious details. Godefroy had agents on almost every island. They gave no salary, but allowed a liberal percentage on "trade." Character was with them of no account, the sole qualification was the faculty of getting on with the natives. Immorality they distinctly fostered, insisting that no agent of theirs should legally marry a native woman. These men, who flooded the islands with "iron money"—the very debased Chilean and Bolivian dollars—are a satire on a name, *papalangé*, "those who have rent the heavens and come down," which was given to whites when they first made their appearance. Unhappily the Steinborger row (with which Godefroy's people had more to do than appeared on

the surface) was complicated with another low American-English quarrel. A certain house traded under two flags, running up the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes, as interest might prompt. Here a Yankee rascal was living and doing mischief; so the United States consul begged help from the captain of the *Seignelay*, and went to seize him. The bird had flown; and as the British flag had been hoisted as soon as the consul's coming was known, there was a grand row about "British subject," and poor Commodore Aube was taken to task as soon as the ship got to Tahiti, removed from his command, and (to the great grief of all his officers and of Miss Cumming) sent off to France in disgrace.

All this made the visit to Samoa less pleasant than it would have been, and gives point to Miss Cumming's hope that somebody, by annexing Samoa, will stop the trade of future Steinborgers. "Samoa and Tahiti are the centres of civilisation in the South Pacific. I would rather, I must confess, have seen more of the wilder isles, the New Hebrides, for instance, where every isle has a language unintelligible in all the rest, not because of differences of race, but thanks to a constant state of war which stopped all intercourse between them. Here human skulls are thought to bring good luck, and are therefore set up on poles outside the villages; the teeth are drawn and sown in the fields; an old woman's teeth especially are thought to ensure a good year's crop. Making them thus useful in no way dishonours the dead, on whose graves they light fires, or at least let the light from the house fall upon them. The cosmogonies of some of these islanders are very Darwinian; one legend tells that men and women were developed out of worms, which the young earth brought forth abundantly. The custom of adoption is as general among them as among old Roman patricians or modern Hindoo princes, but it does not appear to be linked with any idea of keeping up the family religion. It is a mere whim practised by those who have families as much as by the childless, and it lasts on in the civilised islands such as Tahiti. I should like to go amongst men who are still in the state in which they call a goat 'a wonderful bird with great teeth growing out of its head.' This is much nearer pristine simplicity than the condition of mind which looks on a cat as 'a mewling pig,' and a horse as 'a man-carrying pig.'"

But however man differs over this vast

sea-surface, Nature is always lovely. Nukahiva carries off the palm for tropical luxuriance and beauty—no joke intended, though there the cocoa-palm thrives so well that its fruit is thrice the ordinary size. The Society Isles, though, are lovely beyond any European experience. Moorea, with its grand weird rocks, won't disappoint you; nor the moonlights on Tahiti, not to speak of the sunlight through the creepers, and the natural wonders such as the sea-worms, thin as threads, which come ashore by myriads, for only one day in the year, and for their pains get eaten by myriads; and the crabs (with eyes on movable stalks) which perch on trees like birds, are so cleanly that if a leg gets fouled as they are marching overland they tear it off and go and hide till it is grown again.

The stay in Tahiti was made a little sad by the death of Queen Pomare a fortnight before.

Everybody was in mourning, long-trailing robes like those of the queens in the barge in *Morte d'Arthur*; no flowers in hair or ears, or trailing over shoulders—hair indeed cut quite close (though the old cutting for the dead is a thing of the past). Tears, by the way, are in these islands a sign of deep joy quite as much as of sorrow. Friends meeting after long absence have a good cry—"tangi" the Maoris call it.

Of one old custom, taboo, there is a strange survival. Everything belonging to royalty was taboo; to touch it brought ill-luck; and Queen Pomare, zealous Christian though she was, used always to tie up her old clothes, heavily weighted, and have them sunk outside the reef. She had had trouble enough in her day. When Guizot set up the French protectorate, British Consul Pritchard advised her to resist; whereupon the Admiral du Petit Thouary summarily deported him and threatened to bombard her capital. England talked of going to war; but really we have annexed so much that we could hardly quarrel with France for taking such a trifle as the Society Islands. The manner of taking was not greatly to their credit; but civilised nations do not mind that when it is only a question of "natives."

Of course, under France the Roman Catholic became the state religion. The chiefs were obliged to build chapels, and English ministers were so worried that the London Mission withdrew them and arranged for French Protestant missionaries to go out instead.

Romanism has not won many converts.

Miss Cumming found the congregations mostly limited to officials and rank and file of both services, who must attend. But it, or rather "French civilisation," has had the effect of making plenty of agnostics. Fancy "those wild eyes that watch the wave, in moanings round the coral reef," and that used to kindle at the missionary's story, grown hard and cynical, like those of a boulevardier. What good were these missionaries, then, if their influence is so evanescent? No one who reads in Miss Cumming—or in Ellis, or in the old missionary magazines—the record of their work can ever again question their usefulness. They stopped gross immoralities; they educated zealously and efficiently; and their rigid and sometimes foolish dress-rules may well be forgiven in consideration of their constant protests against the iniquitous kidnapping for the Peruvian or other slave-markets, for such they really are. Fancy an islander who had never done anything but fish, scale the high peaks for mountain-bananas, chew the taro-root, and make kawa, hurried away by some "white demon," who had enticed him on board—often by dressing up like a missionary—and set to work amid the inconceivable filth of the Chincha Isles. Often a sandal-wood ship's crew carries off the yams and the pigs in some islet, and, if resistance is made, sets the villages on fire, and perhaps suffocates a cave full of runaways. Of course reprisals follow; the killing of Patteson was in revenge for such an affair; his seven wounds marked the seven who had fallen victims to the white man's scoundrelism. Williams, "the martyr of Evesmanga," one of the few men who get the very work for which their rare gifts fit them, was sacrificed in the same way. It is hard to persuade poor creatures who cannot count above twenty that all whites are not banded together.

The Marquesas are an instance of how the "labour traffic" works. They were full of people, cannibals it is true, and always waging inter-tribal wars, so that many had never left their own little valley "for fear of the enemy." Hither came José, who, kidnapped and carried to Peru, had there become a Christian. He found the isles decimated by small-pox, brought in by the "black-birders." Single-handed he buried the dead and taught the survivors. This was in 1863, soon after the French sold most of the good land to Stewart and Co., and José was "deported" lest he should interfere with

the Sunday work on the tea and coffee grounds.

Tahiti has, happily, been more mercifully dealt with. Here the house of Stewart worked with Chinese who would keep committing suicide—the overseers said as the readiest way of paying their gambling debts. Diseases, however, came in with the whites; influenza, for instance, becoming a regular plague, which, when Miss Cumming was there, had specially attacked the (somewhat drunken) royal family.

A lovely island it must be, with its orange-groves, whence San Francisco is supplied, its rose-apples, its "Tahiti chestnut," almost all the trees fruit-bearing; and on the high ground the scarlet-blossomed ginger, the jasmine, the banana, and papawa, and blue convolvulus and other creepers. And then the choral songs, and the fish-dinners, with centre-pieces of banana stalk looking like white marble, and garlands of *reva reva* (arrowroot fibre), the daintiest gossamer ever spun. It is like fairyland; and Miss Cumming looks back on the time (before the great ice age) when Britain was as Tahiti is now, and our coal-measures were vast ferneries, and tropical beasts roamed over our plains. Of British man in that day all record is gone, save the flints in the drift, unless we suppose Stonehenge and such-like to be pre-glacial.

It is sad to see the old customs disappearing in Polynesia as elsewhere. When the King of Tahiti first turned Christian (becoming, at the same time, a clever and assiduous printer), his messenger, lightly clad, but abundantly crowned with flowers, used to run from hamlet to hamlet, blowing his conch to summon folks to shore or church; now they have bells.

Letters used to be stamped first on plantain leaves and then rolled up. Sums used to be worked on sanded boards. Men dressed in kilts, with flowing robes for state occasions. Now they affect English dress, though, when they first took to it, they thought trowsers equally suitable for legs or arms. All this comes of eating their *eta*, the "tokens" of each tribe. To do this was the surest work of Christianity. Thus, when the king was converted, he had a feast of blue shark (the "token" of the royal tribe), to the dismay of his subjects, who expected the impious feeders would all be choked.

I am glad that in Tahiti idleness is no

longer a mark of rank; the noblest ladies are as industrious at weaving the delicate mat baskets as Louis Philippe's wife was with her needle. As to the good old custom, still kept up, of eating stored-up bread-fruit cakes, they are not sweet certainly, but no more offensive to nose and palate than ripe Stilton or sauerkraut.

But we must part company with Miss Cumming. We are sorry, for she has taken us a delightful round, and has given another instance, and a notable one, of what a woman's pluck can carry her through. Every one who can get hold of them should read her two volumes, and look at her views of island scenery.

AN INDIAN GHOST STORY.

INDIA is a country not well suited for ghosts, and Anglo-Indians as a rule, however they may live in awe of the supernatural at home, leave their fears and fancies behind them when they start for the East. Instances to the contrary no doubt there are, but it may be set down as a rule that spectres of the white species at all events—genuine European ghosts—are not very prone to exhibit themselves out there. There are, it is needless to say, black ghosts of sorts in India; but generally speaking they do not manifest themselves outside the circle of their own immediate acquaintances, and their own colour. The "sahib log" (Europeans) are not molested by these any more than by the other multiform goblins, "bhoots," who play the very mischief with the poor mild Hindoo; or the "pandoobers," water-sprites, very plentiful in many parts of India, whose particular diversion seems to be to catch the unwary traveller by the leg as he fords a stream, or ventures too near a "jheel" after dark, into which stream or jheel he goes, never more to emerge except as one of the rank and file of these same pandoobers. Then there is another notable goblin—a sort of fiery demon, black without and a very furnace of living fire within, who feeds on the insects which are attracted to his jaws. He is called the "Rakus," and he too draws unsuspecting Hindoos to the water. When camping out one winter time on the margin of a swampy lake or morass, hearing a good deal of prattle, sotto voce, amongst my servants and followers, anent the frequent apparition of the Rakus,

and of the whimsical and dangerous character of this particularly grim goblin, I resolved to see what I could make of him, and requested to be informed when next he should make his appearance, intimating at the same time my intention of going up to examine him closely and perhaps trying the effect of a charge of duck-shot. The natives looked at one another, I observed, with mingled astonishment at my temerity in even speaking so disrespectfully of the Rakus, and of pity for my crass ignorance of the direful consequences which such an act would entail. I think, however, they were consoled with the thought that perhaps on a white man or a lunatic the demon would be less disposed to wreak his vengeance, and in that way there was some hope for their master. One bolder than the rest even said he would follow me.

Shortly after the opportunity occurred. There sure enough was the light amongst the rushes, and I recognised an old friend of lands nearer home, where "Will o' the Wisp's" his name." No wonder at the partiality of the Rakus for quagmire, and the fate of those allured to follow him. The notion prevails that he has a body resembling a wolf, and in opening and shutting his eyes and mouth in the process of feeding, the light which illumines the interior shines forth. I failed, however, to perceive the mouth, and made up my mind that it was like the smile of Alice's Cheshire cat, which continued in view after the cat had gone, and was quite independent of her corporeal presence.

There are many kinds of bhoots, one a dwarfish imp, of which the natives in my district went in great fear, though generally said to be harmless and rather well disposed; but as bhoots never molest two or more together, and the wily native takes good care never to travel far alone after dusk, the benign disposition of this hunchback cannot be said to be a well-established fact. There is a sort of bhoot, akin to the Irish banshee, who always comes to announce the approaching death of some member of the family. Something in the bhoot line visited the precincts of my bungalow on the occasion of the death of my cook, who was drowned in the floods whilst gallantly attempting to rescue a fowl. For some nights after this calamity his voice was heard loudly calling upon his old companions and fellow-servants, but the poor cook's own experience on earth and

in the flesh must have taught him that he might call out the whole night through without the smallest chance of so much as a nose being thrust out of the hut door. There are "dains"—i.e., witches—without end in the country whose malignant eye can scathe, and many a time have I been implored to punish, or threaten with punishment, some unfortunate woman of the village, under whose malign influence somebody's crop was failing, or somebody's hopeful heir was wasting away in rapid decline. But in spite of, or probably in consequence of so much puerile superstition around them, Anglo-Indians pay little heed to it. Poor suffering white humanity in India has something else to think of in the thousand and one pests of the country, and as India is not inaptly called "the graveyard of the affections," so is it that of belief in ghosts and spiritual manifestations of all kinds.

But it is not of quiet respectable ghosts that I have to treat in penning this narrative. It is given, I may premise, for what it is worth. I am quite aware that as ghost stories go, it is but a sorry attempt to add to that kind of literature. But it has the merit of being true in every detail, without gloss or exaggeration; it is the experience of one who in regard to apparitions in general is decidedly sceptical, and holds all kinds of spiritual manifestations, such as are described as occurring at the séances of spiritualists, as deserving only of contemptuous ridicule.

In the spring of 187—, I was unfortunate enough to be subpoenaed as a witness on both sides in a lawsuit then pending, each of the litigants thinking that my evidence, though not strictly speaking very relevant to the points at issue, would strengthen his case. There was no shirking a double summons to attend at the trial before the district judge, and accordingly with less regard to economy than I should have perhaps entertained had it been a matter of my own expense and convenience, I made arrangements for the journey of about one hundred miles by palki, thus saving my horses a long tramp in the sun, and the risk and inconvenience attending their crossing two large rivers on country boats. And a very hot, disagreeable journey it was, boxed up fifteen hours in a rickety old palki with the odours of a greasy torch wafted into one's nostrils by night, and the heat and dust by day, not to speak of the wearisome chant or

grunt of the coolies—to them music that cheers them on their way, and without which no nation can perform any labour calling for an exercise of their muscles.

Arrived at Dingyepore I had the choice of two houses wherein to take up my quarters; one the Dāk Bungalow—which is a sort of rest-house for travellers, and supplies the place, very imperfectly, of a roadside inn at home—the other what was dignified with the name of the "Club House;" and to the latter place, having a wholesome abhorrence of Dāk Bungalows, I proceeded.

Dingyepore was not by any means a cheerful station at the best, and at that time of year (April), when the hot west winds were blowing the fine dust about as only a west wind can, and with it all the smoke and unsavoury odours of the bazaar, there was a begrimed and dull appearance about the place which the prevailing dirty buff or yellow wash on the old European houses did not at all tend to ameliorate. A more utterly cheerless station I had never before seen, and of these houses the club, in a large unkempt, weird, parched-up "compound," was certainly the most woebegone and uninviting. It was not built in the thatched bungalow style, but in that usually described as a house in contra-distinction, with the ordinary flat roof and parapet, and the square columns of the verandah and portico. The plaster had parted from the exterior walls in large patches here and there; the once green, now blackened jill-mills or jalousie-doors were all shut, and looked as if they had been so for a generation; the verandah partook of the general dilapidation, and the rank weeds and litter around the house on all sides were quite in keeping with the rest of the picture. However, that was the "mess kotee," or club, and with the small prospect of the Dāk Bungalow being appreciably better, where all seemed so bad, and, moreover, being hungry and tired, and in no mood to prolong the time one moment which must elapse before I could jump into a tub and clean raiment, into the mess kotee I firmly resolved to go, and to dismiss my poor swarthy exhausted kahars to their well-earned meal in the bazaar.

A particularly dirty khansama, roused from his sleep somewhere in the region of the cook-house, appeared before me, after the manner of undisciplined khansamas, in a dirty puggaree and unadorned with "kummerbund," and between us, disturbing a whole colony of spiders in the process, we

managed to effect an entrance to the dingiest of dining-rooms. A half-scared-looking Mussulman being found to do duty as "bearer," I had my tub whilst tiffin was making ready. Then came the siesta of forty winks, and as the shades of evening fell, and the roaring "pachchooa," or west wind died away into a gentle oven-like breeze, and the sun was growing dim on the red cumulus of dust still floating in the atmosphere in every direction, I strolled about the compound, hoping some one would turn up to bear me company at dinner, and wishing plaintiff and defendant at Hanover for giving me so much trouble.

There is a luxury, if it may be so called, of Indian country life, not only in camp but in out-of-the-way houses, and I need hardly say chiefly among bachelors—a custom which, on occasions, I have indulged in—namely, dining in "pyjamas," i.e., sleeping-drawers, and simply a banian (or gauze vest of thinnest texture), and perhaps with the additional adornment of a linen shirt, though this is better dispensed with when nobody is likely to drop in, and it is hot weather. In some such graceful attire as this, with the ends of my pyjamas thrust into my socks to keep the mosquitoes out, I was intent upon a tough attenuated fowl that had died hard some two hours previously, when a chuprassie (messenger) handed me a note. It was from the sessions judge's wife, Mrs. Z., whom I had once before met in my own district, very kindly expressing her desire that I would at once repair to her house to dine and spend the night, she having heard of my arrival in the station, and she added that my inexperience of Dingyepore was evident, or I should never have chosen as a resting-place the one in which I then was; that she had sufficient reason to know I should be very uncomfortable; and it would be far wiser to jump into my palki and join herself and husband at dinner, there and then.

Very much to my regret afterwards I excused myself, on the ground of having already partly dined, and it being late in the evening and a matter of no slight difficulty to collect at so short a notice the palki coolies dispersed about the town. In the secret recesses of my heart I much preferred to remain where I was and as I was, in the quiet enjoyment of my evening pipe, and to turn in early to make up for loss of rest on the previous night.

It was about half-past nine at night

when the bearer left me in bed with the usual "tel buttee" (oil-lamp) on the floor. It was too early in the season for punkahs, and the club, amongst other mysteries of its being, not possessing such superfluities as mosquito-curtains, there was nothing to be done but grin and bear it and sleep without them. There is nothing to describe in an Indian bedroom at such a house as this. Four whitewashed walls, one door leading into a bath-room, two doors into the next room, two more into the open air; two beds with no distinction of head and tail, save the pillow, side by side in the middle of the room, and a chair or two. Such was my bedroom. The two doors leading to the next bedroom, and thence to the dining-room beyond, were at the foot of my bed behind me the open doors and the darkness without. Mosquitoes or no mosquitoes, "Nature's soft nurse" will sometimes come to us at a moment's notice, even in India, and I was sound asleep in a very short time.

But not for long.

At half-past twelve I was awakened by the most piercing and startling scream or shout that one can well imagine, close, it seemed, to the very tympanum of my ear. Without writing for effect or wishing to adopt the phraseology of sensational ghost-stories, I can only describe it as an unearthly sound, whether of distress or hilarity I know not. It might do for both or neither.

"Nightmare, of course!" the reader has already said to himself.

But I proceed. I listened attentively for fifteen minutes or so, rather wishing for a repetition, feeling not frightened, but certainly surprised, trying to persuade myself that it might have been a jackal unusually close to the house or even inside my room, or perhaps one of those querulous owls which are always about Indian houses at night. I got up, walked into the verandah through the open doorway, and looked into the darkness. Those eternal crickets and grasshoppers were chirping away, as is their wont, a few fire-flies flitted about in the still night air, and there was the usual chorus of irate pariah dogs baying in distant villages. I returned to my bed and fell asleep a second time, but again not for long. The same wild mysterious cry exactly! But this time it was repeated as I sat upright from the startling effect of the first shriek, and then followed a prolonged series of the most violent thumps and hammerings, seemingly beneath the

boards of the floor, and at times far away below ground in dull heavy thuds, but with persistent violence, as if the whole foundations were being battered at with tremendous force.

"Porcupines, of course!" says the reader, if an Anglo-Indian.

But I proceed again. To my further amazement I saw the two wings of the door opposite me at the foot of the bed, which, as I should have said, I had myself closed but a short time before, slowly and deliberately open wide. Beyond all was dark, save such light as the flickering wick of my lamp could throw through the chinks of the door into the adjoining room. Not a sound was audible of a foot-step or movement of any kind. There was absolute stillness, and not a breath of air stirring outside. Then it was that I felt—and I was without any tension of the imagination then or since—a Presence. I can only describe it as such.

I could see nobody in the room, but there was fact—a sense of someone's presence there. I had never before, nor have I since, experienced any such impression, but such was the fact then, and the feeling forced itself upon me in so unmistakable a manner that I am chilled now when I recall the occasion. For the first in my life, and the only time, I felt that beyond a doubt there was an unseen presence of one or more persons in close proximity to me. The subterranean sounds had ceased with the opening of the door, but not so the feeling of this horrid chilling presence. It was palpable and incomprehensible. I made a determined effort to compose myself to sleep again, but it was soon evident that further sleep in that room was out of the question, so without any more thought on the subject I resolved to quit the interior of the house and to seek my palki outside in the verandah. I lit my candle and took a parting look over the whole house. It was a quarter to two o'clock. The long dining-room was as I had left it; every door leading into the open was securely fastened. I let myself out and finished the night in my palki, undisturbed by anything more worrying or ghostly than the mosquitoes and sand-flies.

The case in court occupied the whole of the next day. I had resolved to return to the club that evening, to collect my traps and move to the Dāk Bungalow, near to the court-house, not caring to attempt another night's rest at the former, when to my

great pleasure I found that during the day a few hale and hearty indigo-planters had arrived at the station from their distant out-lying farms, all with one exception strangers to me, and that they had made the club their head-quarters. There, in view of a social evening, I determined to remain. Our party was soon augmented to the number of ten or twelve, and we dined and spent a very jovial time together, cracking jokes and discussing the merits of the law-suit and its probable results, winding up with convivial songs and sundry "pegs," as is the time-honoured custom there and elsewhere.

Between one and two a.m. we all turned in. Four beds had been rigged up in my room, and in the next some four or five more, and so we were all quietly stowed away for the night—or rather morning.

It is hardly necessary to say that I had not breathed a word to any one, nor had I had much time to think of my experiences of the previous night. Had it occurred to me to relate them, it was not a story likely to meet with much favour in that company at any time, and it would have fallen flat and insipid on ears attentive to anecdotes of a widely different description, and my many years' experience of the kind of jokes that "take," and the small heed that is paid to any other, taught me that any attempt to broach such a topic seriously—and so I could only speak of it—would only have resulted in my being silently voted an ass. This, apart from disinclination on my part to even think seriously of it, was sufficient motive for complete reticence, and it would be nearer the truth to say that in the boisterous hilarity of that evening I had not once given a passing thought to my ghost of yesternight.

About an hour or so after we had "turned in" I was awakened by my friend in the next bed. I found him sitting upright, and he had addressed me to know if I had seen anyone prowling about our room with a light in one hand and a sort of club or cudgel in the other, apparently searching for something. I replied in the negative, that I had been asleep and seen nothing and wanted to see nothing. "Well," he replied, "I fancy it is C— (one of our party), though I could get no reply from him when I asked him what he was doing and why he was thrusting the light into each sleeper's face. We had better get up and see who it really is and

what he wants." And so we did forthwith. But C—— was sound asleep, and being roused he assured us solemnly and earnestly that he had never once, unless in his sleep, quitted his bed. All the others were also asleep. Next morning at early breakfast, the subject was briefly discussed, no one, I fancy, crediting the facts, but C—— came in for a fair amount of chaff as being a somnambulist or would-be assassin, and on the other hand my friend L—— was recommended to be careful of his diet, and to avoid heavy meals, in which case he would not see visions and disturb his neighbours.

I don't wish to lay undue stress on this part of my narrative. Whether L—— saw anyone, or only dreamt he did, is not for anyone but himself to say. I will only bear testimony to two facts: that he was about the last man in the world to imagine it, and he did not know what indigestion was. It never once occurred to him that his visitor was or might be other than human, and as to its being a ghost, he would now, I believe, if asked, ridicule the bare possibility, as he would also the suggestion that on his part it was but a dream.

I wish it to be understood that I have mentioned this incident in order that it may be taken in connection with all the circumstances of my tale. It was never discovered who the visitor with the cudgel really was. It may have been a sleep-walker of our party, or it may have been a case of nightmare pure and simple, in spite of any assertion to the contrary. Viewed from any point, the fact is not at all extraordinary taken by itself.

The third night I spent as a guest at the sessions judge's, to whose wife's note of invitation I have before alluded. It appeared that in expressing in that note her fears for my comfort at the club-house, she had in mind certain vague rumours of its being a very disagreeable and noisy place, but she was personally acquainted with its exterior only. With one of those unpremeditated and conventional fibs of the moment, I believe I assured her I had been fairly comfortable, and thanked her all the same for her hospitable intentions. One of the oldest houses in the place, and long since disused as a residence for Europeans, it had become a sort of social club, supported mainly by indigo-planters of a past generation in the golden age of that industry, and by others of the district, who from

time to time assembled there when duty or pleasure brought them into the station. But as time went on, it had, from various causes, lost much of its original character as a club, or had entirely collapsed as such, existing merely as a sort of supplemental Dāk Bungalow, and being frequented only at wide intervals by casual visitors, and rapidly falling into dilapidation and decay.

On the fourth day I was free to leave the station, and hurried back home, as I had come, in my palkī.

Two years passed away, and I thought little more of my short sojourn at Dingy-pore. Nor did I ever, on any occasion, speak to anyone of the circumstances which had rendered it to me a memorable visit. Sometimes when it has been my lot to be far away in remote parts of the country, often alone in camp, or in big, gaunt, unfurnished houses, I have thought, in the solemn stillness of the night hours, how singularly free one is from fears of any kind in India, though so frequently disturbed by nocturnal noises of many kinds. Complete indifference to dangers in general, and a blissful state of apathy in regard to the supernatural, is one's normal condition in that country, enervation and liver disorders notwithstanding. And so with my troubles at Dingy-pore, the whole occurrence, like a dream remembered for a time, had nearly passed into oblivion, when it was vividly brought to mind again in this way:

During one of the annual Sky race-meets of the district, when Europeans from all parts of the country assemble together in the station, and besides races maintain with ardour a round of social festivities for ten days or so, I was a guest at the camp of the station collector (or chief magistrate). We mustered there about twenty of both sexes. Amongst the men was one from the district of Dingy-pore.

One evening, when seated, all of our party, out in the open enjoying the cool evening air, conversation turned on ghosts. It was not very animated or sustained. No one knew much about them, and cared less, and we agreed that they were all nonsense. I was silent in regard to my own experience of the mysterious ten years before, and some one ventured on the remark that his great difficulty in regard to ghosts was that, though one might read tales of them, no one could really say he or she had heard or seen any visitor from the

spirit-world, or personally knew anybody who had. I was about to make an observation somewhat challenging this opinion, when the visitor from Dingeypore, who had been a sedate listener and silent throughout, interrupted me with the following speech: "I am not so sure of that. If fellows down my way are to be believed, an old house they call the club in Dingeypore is haunted to perfection. To my knowledge several have been sorely puzzled if not frightened there, and strange to say they have lately discovered that one of the rooms is built over the site of an old Mussulman cemetery. There the traces of the graves are—right under the floor.

Without any reference to my sojourn there, I asked for a description of the situation of this particular room. He gave it accurately; it was the identical room I had found it necessary to quit in the small hours of the morning on the only occasion on which I ever visited Dingeypore. This sequel to my story I likewise kept to myself so long as I remained in the country; but at home in England, I have on occasions more than once spoken of it as being, to say the least, singular; a subsequent enquiry proving the report of the presence of old graves on the spot stated quite true.

It will, doubtless, seem to some that I was the victim of a joke. To this I reply that it is in the very highest degree improbable, as anyone acquainted with India would know well. Natives have neither the pluck, energy, nor inclination—I might say the impudence—to ever attempt such a thing: they are far too much in dread of the supernatural to play with it, or treat it with levity; and, moreover, they are by no means addicted to merriment of this kind, still less to

practical joking, and that on "sahibs," or their betters of any degree. From my own knowledge of native character, I dismiss the idea as too absurd for consideration.

On the assumption that men of my own colour did it, an assumption which has just a very small element of probability to make the matter worth considering, I would simply say that, looking at the circumstances of the distance from the European quarters of the station; of the time of night, and the time of year; of the fact of my being a complete stranger there, and my arrival too sudden and unexpected to admit of preconcerted plan; at the fact of the whole male portion of the white community being about four sober civilians, mostly married men—and the only others being planters at their homes, ten, twenty, perhaps forty miles apart in the district—the probability is very remote indeed. Under the most favourable conditions, the fun of such a freak would be nothing to the trouble and inconvenience to the perpetrators. India is not the land for it. The game is not worth the candle.

I leave the reader to form his own conclusions. I am quite disposed to admit any reasonable explanation, and more than willing to consider the matter quite capable of one. But I can only say that such has not been forthcoming to my own satisfaction.

I had hoped for an opportunity of visiting the place again and seeing what I could really make of it, but my duties have never led me in that direction, and one's time is not always one's own in India as elsewhere, and so the whole episode remains unexplained to the present hour.

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